

Senate Bill No. 1785

Passed the Senate August 30, 1998

Secretary of the Senate

Passed the Assembly August 26, 1998

Chief Clerk of the Assembly

This bill was received by the Governor this ____ day
of _____, 1998, at ____ o'clock __M.

Private Secretary of the Governor

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CHAPTER ____

An act to amend Sections 1815, 1816, 1834, 1845, 1846, 1847, and 2080 of, and to add Section 1834.4 to, the Civil Code, to amend Sections 31108, 31752, and 32001 of, to add Sections 17005, 17006, 31752.5, 31753, and 32003 to, and to add, repeal, and add Section 31754 of, the Food and Agricultural Code, and to amend Section 597.1 of, and to add Section 599d to, the Penal Code, relating to stray animals.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1785, Hayden. Stray animals: duties of pounds and shelters.

Existing law specifies the rights and duties of persons who find lost property of another or who, either voluntarily or involuntarily, are the depositaries of the property of another. Existing law provides that involuntary depositaries are entitled to no reward for the thing deposited; however, finders are entitled to reasonable compensation for saving and taking care of the property.

This bill would set forth the findings of the Legislature with respect to animal shelters, humane organizations, lost or stray animals, and neuter programs, declare the policy of the state with respect to adoptable and treatable animals, as specified, and set forth the intent of the bill. The bill would (1) provide that (a) a person or public or private entity that holds a stray, live animal shall be deemed an involuntary depositary; and (b) all depositaries of live animals have a duty to provide them with necessary and prompt veterinary care, nutrition, and shelter, and to treat them humanely and failure to do so may subject the depositary to liability for civil damages; (2) authorize involuntary depositaries of live animals to accept rewards, as specified; and (3) require a public depositary of a stray live animal to take charge of it, as specified.



Existing law provides that no dog or cat impounded by a public pound or specified shelter shall be killed before 72 hours have elapsed from the time of impounding.

This bill would, effective July 1, 1999, expand this minimum impound time to 4 or 6 business days, as specified, and would require that the animal be released to a nonprofit animal rescue or adoption organization in certain circumstances, subject to specified exceptions. The bill would also provide impounding time periods, and care, redemption, and adoption requirements applicable to other specified animals.

Existing law requires public pounds and specified shelters to provide owners and finders of lost animals with specified services to restore the lost animals to their owners. Existing law specifies that these requirements are not mandatory duties and do not create a cause of action against public entities or employees.

This bill would declare that the duty to provide these services is a mandatory duty for public entities and their contractors. The bill would also require pounds and shelters to keep specified records regarding impounded animals for 3 years after the animal's impoundment ends.

Because this bill would impose new duties on local officials, it would create a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed \$1,000,000 statewide and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed \$1,000,000.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(1) Public and private shelters and humane organizations share a common purpose in saving animals' lives, preventing animal suffering, and eliminating animal abandonment.

(2) Public and private shelters and humane groups should work together to end euthanasia of adoptable and treatable animals by 2010.

(b) The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(1) Redemption of owned pets and adoption of lost or stray adoptable animals is preferable to incurring social and economic costs of euthanasia.

(2) Shelters should be open during hours that permit working pet owners to redeem pets during nonworking hours.

(3) Shelters should aggressively promote spay and neuter programs to reduce pet overpopulation.

(4) Shelters should not adopt out animals that are not spayed or neutered.

(5) Public shelters should work with humane animal adoption organizations to the fullest extent possible to promote the adoption of animals and to reduce the rate of killing.

(c) The intent of this act is to do all of the following:

(1) Increase the focus of shelters to owner redemption and adoption by making recordkeeping mandatory to aid in owner redemption, providing owner relinquished pets the same holding period as stray animals to allow for adoption, and providing for an explicit adoption period.

(2) Consolidate and list clear guidelines for care and treatment for animals held in shelters.

(3) Extend public shelter responsibilities from dogs and cats to other legal pets.

(4) Make shelters accountable to pet owners and the public for records and the care of animals in their possession.



(5) Make clear that shelter responsibilities are the same as those legally assumed by a person who voluntarily picks up an animal.

(d) The Legislature finds and declares that statutory law prescribes the type of treatment that private citizens must extend to stray animals they voluntarily pick up and that public and private animal shelters should be held to the same legal duties as those that exist for private citizens.

(e) The Legislature finds and declares that it is better to have public and private shelters pick up or take in animals than private citizens. The Legislature further finds that the taking in of animals is important for public health and safety, to aid in the return of the animal to its owner, and to prevent inhumane conditions for lost or free roaming animals.

(f) The Legislature finds and declares that shelters should be required by law to take in lost animals and properly care for them with prompt veterinary care, adequate nutrition, shelter, exercise, and water.

(g) The Legislature finds and declares that shelters receiving animals that have identification should make reasonable attempts to notify the owner of the animal's location.

(h) The Legislature finds and declares that the duties of shelters to properly care for an animal do not cease if the owner of a lost animal does not claim the animal, and the shelter should have the duty to make the animal available for adoption for a reasonable period of time and to care properly for the animal during this period.

(i) The Legislature finds and declares that lost animals should be held for a period of time to ensure that the owner has proper access to redeem the animal.

SEC. 2. Section 1815 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

1815. An involuntary deposit is made:

(a) By the accidental leaving or placing of personal property in the possession of any person, without negligence on the part of its owner.

(b) In cases of fire, shipwreck, inundation, insurrection, riot, or like extraordinary emergencies, by the owner of personal property committing it, out of necessity, to the care of any person.

(c) By the delivery to, or pick up by, and the holding of, a stray live animal by any person, or public or private entity.

SEC. 3. Section 1816 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

1816. (a) The person or private entity with whom a thing is deposited in the manner described in Section 1815 is bound to take charge of it, if able to do so.

(b) A public agency or shelter with whom a thing is deposited in the manner described in Section 1815 is bound to take charge of it, as provided in Section 597.1 of the Penal Code.

SEC. 4. Section 1834 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

1834. A depositary of living animals shall provide the animals with necessary and prompt veterinary care, nutrition, and shelter, and treat them kindly. Any depositary that fails to perform these duties may be liable for civil damages as provided by law.

SEC. 5. Section 1834.4 is added to the Civil Code, to read:

1834.4. (a) It is the policy of the state that no adoptable animal should be euthanized if it can be adopted into a suitable home. Adoptable animals include only those animals eight weeks of age or older that, at or subsequent to the time the animal is impounded or otherwise taken into possession, have manifested no sign of a behavioral or temperamental defect that could pose a health or safety risk or otherwise make the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and have manifested no sign of disease, injury, or congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the health of the animal or that is likely to adversely affect the animal's health in the future.

(b) It is the policy of the state that no treatable animal should be euthanized. A treatable animal shall include



any animal that is not adoptable but that could become adoptable with reasonable efforts. This subdivision, by itself, shall not be the basis of liability for damages regarding euthanasia.

SEC. 6. Section 1845 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

1845. An involuntary deposit is gratuitous, the depositary being entitled to no reward. However, an involuntary depositary of any live animal may accept advertised rewards or rewards freely offered by the owner of the animal.

SEC. 7. Section 1846 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

1846. (a) A gratuitous depositary must use, at least, slight care for the preservation of the thing deposited.

(b) A gratuitous depositary of a living animal shall provide the animal with necessary and prompt veterinary care, adequate nutrition and water, and shelter, and shall treat it humanely and, if the animal has any identification, make reasonable attempts to notify the owner of the animal's location. Any gratuitous depositary that does not have sufficient resources or desire to provide that care shall promptly turn the animal over to an appropriate care facility.

(c) If the gratuitous depositary of a living animal is a public pound, shelter operated by a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or humane shelter, the depositary shall comply with all other requirements of the Food and Agricultural Code regarding the impounding of live animals.

SEC. 8. Section 1847 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

1847. The duties of a gratuitous depositary cease:

(a) Upon restoration by the depositary of the thing deposited to its owner.

(b) Upon reasonable notice given by the depositary to the owner to remove it, and the owner failing to do so within a reasonable time. But an involuntary depositary, under subdivision (b) of Section 1815, may not give notice until the emergency that gave rise to the deposit is past.

This subdivision shall not apply to a public pound, a shelter operated by a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or a humane shelter. The duty to provide care, as required by Section 1846, continues until the public pound or private shelter is lawfully relieved of responsibility for the animal.

SEC. 9. Section 2080 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

2080. Any person who finds a thing lost is not bound to take charge of it, unless the person is otherwise required to do so by contract or law, but when the person does take charge of it he or she is thenceforward a depositary for the owner, with the rights and obligations of a depositary for hire. Any person or any public or private entity that finds and takes possession of any money, goods, things in action, or other personal property, or saves any domestic animal from harm, neglect, drowning, or starvation, shall, within a reasonable time, inform the owner, if known, and make restitution without compensation, except a reasonable charge for saving and taking care of the property. Any person who takes possession of a live domestic animal shall provide for humane treatment of the animal.

SEC. 10. Section 17005 is added to the Food and Agricultural Code, to read:

17005. (a) It is the policy of the state that no adoptable animal should be euthanized if it can be adopted into a suitable home. Adoptable animals include only those animals eight weeks of age or older that, at or subsequent to the time the animal is impounded or otherwise taken into possession, have manifested no sign of a behavioral or temperamental defect that could pose a health or safety risk or otherwise make the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and have manifested no sign of disease, injury, or congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the health of the animal or that is likely to adversely affect the animal's health in the future.

(b) It is the policy of the state that no treatable animal should be euthanized. A treatable animal shall include



any animal that is not adoptable but that could become adoptable with reasonable efforts. This subdivision, by itself, shall not be the basis of liability for damages regarding euthanasia.

SEC. 11. Section 17006 is added to the Food and Agricultural Code, to read:

17006. Animals that are irremediably suffering from a serious illness or severe injury shall not be held for owner redemption or adoption. Newborn animals that need maternal care and have been impounded without their mothers may be euthanized without being held for owner redemption or adoption.

SEC. 12. Section 31108 of the Food and Agricultural Code is amended to read:

31108. (a) The required holding period for a stray dog impounded pursuant to this division shall be six business days, not including the day of impoundment, except as follows:

(1) If the pound or shelter has made the dog available for owner redemption on one weekday evening until at least 7:00 p.m. or one weekend day, the holding period shall be four business days, not including the day of impoundment.

(2) If the pound or shelter has fewer than three full-time employees or is not open during all regular weekday business hours, and if it has established a procedure to enable owners to reclaim their dogs by appointment at a mutually agreeable time when the pound or shelter would otherwise be closed, the holding period shall be four business days, not including the day of impoundment.

Except as provided in Section 17006, stray dogs shall be held for owner redemption during the first three days of the holding period, not including the day of impoundment, and shall be available for owner redemption or adoption for the remainder of the holding period.

(b) Any stray dog that is impounded pursuant to this division shall, prior to the killing of that animal for any reason other than irremediable suffering, be released to

a nonprofit, as defined in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, animal rescue or adoption organization if requested by the organization prior to the scheduled killing of that animal. In addition to any required spay or neuter deposit, the pound or shelter, at its discretion, may assess a fee, not to exceed the standard adoption fee, for animals released.

SEC. 13. Section 31752 of the Food and Agricultural Code is amended to read:

31752. (a) The required holding period for a stray cat impounded pursuant to this division shall be six business days, not including the day of impoundment, except as follows:

(1) If the pound or shelter has made the cat available for owner redemption on one weekday evening until at least 7:00 p.m. or one weekend day, the holding period shall be four business days, not including the day of impoundment.

(2) If the pound or shelter has fewer than three full-time employees or is not open during all regular weekday business hours, and if it has established a procedure to enable owners to reclaim their cats by appointment at a mutually agreeable time when the pound or shelter would otherwise be closed, the holding period shall be four business days, not including the day of impoundment.

Except as provided in Sections 17006 and 31752.5, stray cats shall be held for owner redemption during the first three days of the holding period, not including the day of impoundment, and shall be available for owner redemption or adoption for the remainder of the holding period.

(b) Any stray cat that is impounded pursuant to this division shall, prior to the killing of that animal for any reason other than irremediable suffering, be released to a nonprofit, as defined in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, animal rescue or adoption organization if requested by the organization prior to the scheduled killing of that animal. In addition to any required spay or neuter deposit, the pound or shelter, at



its discretion, may assess a fee, not to exceed the standard adoption fee, for animals released.

SEC. 14. Section 31752.5 is added to the Food and Agricultural Code, to read:

31752.5. (a) The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(1) Domestic cats' temperaments range from completely docile indoor pets to completely unsocialized outdoor cats that avoid all contact with humans.

(2) "Feral cats" are cats with temperaments that are completely unsocialized, although frightened or injured tame pet cats may appear to be feral.

(3) Some people care for or own feral cats.

(4) Feral cats pose particular safety hazards for shelter employees.

(5) It is cruel to keep feral cats caged for long periods of time; however, it is not always easy to distinguish a feral cat from a frightened tame cat.

(b) For the purposes of this section, a "feral cat" is defined as a cat without owner identification of any kind whose usual and consistent temperament is extreme fear and resistance to contact with people. A feral cat is totally unsocialized to people.

(c) Notwithstanding Section 31752, if an apparently feral cat has not been reclaimed by its owner or caretaker within the first three days of the required holding period, shelter personnel qualified to verify the temperament of the animal shall verify whether it is feral or tame by using a standardized protocol. If the cat is determined to be docile or a frightened or difficult tame cat, the cat shall be held for the entire required holding period specified in Section 31752. If the cat is determined to be truly feral, the cat may be euthanized or relinquished to a nonprofit, as defined in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, animal adoption organization that agrees to the spaying or neutering of the cat if it has not already been spayed or neutered. In addition to any required spay or neuter deposit, the pound or shelter, at its discretion, may assess a fee, not to exceed the standard adoption fee, for the animal released.

SEC. 15. Section 31753 is added to the Food and Agricultural Code, to read:

31753. Any rabbit, guinea pig, hamster, pot-bellied pig, bird, lizard, snake, turtle, or tortoise legally allowed as personal property impounded in a public or private shelter shall be held for the same period of time, under the same requirements of care, and with the same opportunities for redemption and adoption by new owners or nonprofit, as defined in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, animal rescue or adoption organizations as cats and dogs. Section 17006 shall also apply to these animals. In addition to any required spay or neuter deposit, the pound or shelter, at its discretion, may assess a fee, not to exceed the standard adoption fee, for animals released to nonprofit animal rescue or adoption organizations pursuant to this section.

SEC. 16. Section 31754 is added to the Food and Agricultural Code, to read:

31754. (a) Except as provided in Section 17006, any animal relinquished by the purported owner that is of a species impounded by pounds or shelters shall be held for two full business days, not including the day of impoundment. The animal shall be available for owner redemption for the first day, not including the day of impoundment, and shall be available for owner redemption or adoption for the second day. After the second required day, the animal may be held longer, killed, or relinquished to a nonprofit, as defined in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, animal adoption organization under the same conditions and circumstances provided for stray dogs and cats in Sections 31108 and 31752.

(b) This section shall become operative on July 1, 1999. This section shall become inoperative on July 1, 2001, and, as of January 1, 2002, is repealed, unless a later enacted statute that is enacted before January 1, 2002, deletes or extends the dates on which it becomes inoperative and is repealed.

SEC. 16.5. Section 31754 is added to the Food and Agricultural Code, to read:



31754. (a) Except as provided in Section 17006, any animal relinquished by the purported owner that is of a species impounded by pounds or shelters shall be held for the same holding periods, with the same requirements of care, applicable to stray dogs and cats in Sections 31108 and 31755, except that the period for owner redemption shall be one day, not including the day of impoundment, and the period for owner redemption or adoption shall be the remainder of the holding period.

(b) This section shall become operative on July 1, 2001.

SEC. 17. Section 32001 of the Food and Agricultural Code is amended to read:

32001. All public pounds, shelters operated by societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and humane shelters, that contract to perform public animal control services, shall provide the owners of lost animals and those who find lost animals with all of the following:

(a) Ability to list the animals they have lost or found on “Lost and Found” lists maintained by the pound or shelter.

(b) Referrals to animals listed that may be the animals the owners or finders have lost or found.

(c) The telephone numbers and addresses of other pounds and shelters in the same vicinity.

(d) Advice as to means of publishing and disseminating information regarding lost animals.

(e) The telephone numbers and addresses of volunteer groups that may be of assistance in locating lost animals.

The duties imposed by this section are mandatory duties for public entities for all purposes of the Government Code and for all private entities with which a public entity has contracted to perform those duties.

SEC. 18. Section 32003 is added to the Food and Agricultural Code, to read:

32003. All public pounds and private shelters shall keep accurate records on each animal taken up, medically treated, or impounded. The records shall include all of the following information and any other

information required by the California Veterinary Medical Board:

(a) The date the animal was taken up, medically treated, euthanized, or impounded.

(b) The circumstances under which the animal was taken up, medically treated, euthanized, or impounded.

(c) The names of the personnel who took up, medically treated, euthanized, or impounded the animal.

(d) A description of any medical treatment provided to the animal and the name of the veterinarian of record.

(e) The final disposition of the animal, including the name of the person who euthanized the animal or the name and address of the adopting party. These records shall be maintained for three years after the date the animal's impoundment ends.

SEC. 19. Section 597.1 of the Penal Code is amended to read:

597.1. (a) Every owner, driver, or keeper of any animal who permits the animal to be in any building, enclosure, lane, street, square, or lot of any city, county, city and county, or judicial district without proper care and attention is guilty of a misdemeanor. Any peace officer, humane society officer, or animal control officer shall take possession of the stray or abandoned animal and shall provide care and treatment for the animal until the animal is deemed to be in suitable condition to be returned to the owner. When the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that very prompt action is required to protect the health or safety of the animal or the health or safety of others, the officer shall immediately seize the animal and comply with subdivision (f). In all other cases, the officer shall comply with the provisions of subdivision (g). The cost of caring for and treating any animal properly seized under this subdivision shall constitute a lien on the animal and the animal shall not be returned to its owner until the charges are paid, if the seizure is upheld pursuant to this section.

(b) Every sick, disabled, infirm, or crippled animal, except a dog or cat, that is abandoned in any city, county, city and county, or judicial district may be killed by the



officer if, after a reasonable search, no owner of the animal can be found. It shall be the duty of all peace officers, humane society officers, and animal control officers to cause the animal to be killed or rehabilitated and placed in a suitable home on information that the animal is stray or abandoned. The officer may likewise take charge of any animal, including a dog or cat, that by reason of lameness, sickness, feebleness, or neglect, is unfit for the labor it is performing, or that in any other manner is being cruelly treated, and provide care and treatment for the animal until it is deemed to be in a suitable condition to be returned to the owner. When the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that very prompt action is required to protect the health or safety of an animal or the health or safety of others, the officer shall immediately seize the animal and comply with subdivision (f). In all other cases, the officer shall comply with subdivision (g). The cost of caring for and treating any animal properly seized under this subdivision shall constitute a lien on the animal and the animal shall not be returned to its owner until the charges are paid.

(c) Any peace officer, humane society officer, or animal control officer shall convey all injured cats and dogs found without their owners in a public place directly to a veterinarian known by the officer to be a veterinarian who ordinarily treats dogs and cats for a determination of whether the animal shall be immediately and humanely destroyed or shall be hospitalized under proper care and given emergency treatment.

If the owner does not redeem the animal within the locally prescribed waiting period, the veterinarian may personally perform euthanasia on the animal. If the animal is treated and recovers from its injuries, the veterinarian may keep the animal for purposes of adoption, provided the responsible animal control agency has first been contacted and has refused to take possession of the animal.

Whenever any animal is transferred to a veterinarian in a clinic, such as an emergency clinic that is not in



continuous operation, the veterinarian may, in turn, transfer the animal to an appropriate facility.

If the veterinarian determines that the animal shall be hospitalized under proper care and given emergency treatment, the costs of any services that are provided pending the owner's inquiry to the responsible agency, department, or society shall be paid from the dog license fees, fines, and fees for impounding dogs in the city, county, or city and county in which the animal was licensed or, if the animal is unlicensed, shall be paid by the jurisdiction in which the animal was found, subject to the provision that this cost be repaid by the animal's owner. The cost of caring for and treating any animal seized under this subdivision shall constitute a lien on the animal and the animal shall not be returned to the owner until the charges are paid. No veterinarian shall be criminally or civilly liable for any decision that he or she makes or for services that he or she provides pursuant to this subdivision.

(d) An animal control agency that takes possession of an animal pursuant to subdivision (c) shall keep records of the whereabouts of the animal from the time of possession to the end of the animal's impoundment, and those records shall be available for inspection by the public upon request for three years after the date the animal's impoundment ended.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any peace officer, humane society officer, or any animal control officer may, with the approval of his or her immediate superior, humanely destroy any stray or abandoned animal in the field in any case where the animal is too severely injured to move or where a veterinarian is not available and it would be more humane to dispose of the animal.

(f) Whenever an officer authorized under this section seizes or impounds an animal based on a reasonable belief that prompt action is required to protect the health or safety of the animal or the health or safety of others, the officer shall, prior to the commencement of any criminal proceedings authorized by this section, provide the



owner or keeper of the animal, if known or ascertainable after reasonable investigation, with the opportunity for a postseizure hearing to determine the validity of the seizure or impoundment, or both.

(1) The agency shall cause a notice to be affixed to a conspicuous place where the animal was situated or personally deliver a notice of the seizure or impoundment, or both, to the owner or keeper within 48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays. The notice shall include all of the following:

(A) The name, business address, and telephone number of the officer providing the notice.

(B) A description of the animal seized, including any identification upon the animal.

(C) The authority and purpose for the seizure, or impoundment, including the time, place, and circumstances under which the animal was seized.

(D) A statement that, in order to receive a postseizure hearing, the owner or person authorized to keep the animal, or his or her agent, shall request the hearing by signing and returning an enclosed declaration of ownership or right to keep the animal to the agency providing the notice within 10 days, including weekends and holidays, of the date of the notice. The declaration may be returned by personal delivery or mail.

(E) A statement that the cost of caring for and treating any animal properly seized under this section is a lien on the animal and that the animal shall not be returned to the owner until the charges are paid, and that failure to request or to attend a scheduled hearing shall result in liability for this cost.

(2) The postseizure hearing shall be conducted within 48 hours of the request, excluding weekends and holidays. The seizing agency may authorize its own officer or employee to conduct the hearing if the hearing officer is not the same person who directed the seizure or impoundment of the animal and is not junior in rank to that person. The agency may utilize the services of a hearing officer from outside the agency for the purposes of complying with this section.



(3) Failure of the owner or keeper, or of his or her agent, to request or to attend a scheduled hearing shall result in a forfeiture of any right to a postseizure hearing or right to challenge his or her liability for costs incurred.

(4) The agency, department, or society employing the person who directed the seizure shall be responsible for the costs incurred for caring and treating the animal, if it is determined in the postseizure hearing that the seizing officer did not have reasonable grounds to believe very prompt action, including seizure of the animal, was required to protect the health or safety of the animal or the health or safety of others. If it is determined the seizure was justified, the owner or keeper shall be personally liable to the seizing agency for the cost of the seizure and care of the animal, the charges for the seizure and care of the animal shall be a lien on the animal, and the animal shall not be returned to its owner until the charges are paid and the seizing agency or hearing officer has determined that the animal is physically fit or the owner demonstrates to the seizing agency's or the hearing officer's satisfaction that the owner can and will provide the necessary care.

(g) Where the need for immediate seizure is not present and prior to the commencement of any criminal proceedings authorized by this section, the agency shall provide the owner or keeper of the animal, if known or ascertainable after reasonable investigation, with the opportunity for a hearing prior to any seizure or impoundment of the animal. The owner shall produce the animal at the time of the hearing unless, prior to the hearing, the owner has made arrangements with the agency to view the animal upon request of the agency, or unless the owner can provide verification that the animal was humanely destroyed. Any person who willfully fails to produce the animal or provide the verification is guilty of an infraction, punishable by a fine of not less than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) nor more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

(1) The agency shall cause a notice to be affixed to a conspicuous place where the animal was situated or



personally deliver a notice stating the grounds for believing the animal should be seized under subdivision (a) or (b). The notice shall include all of the following:

(A) The name, business address, and telephone number of the officer providing the notice.

(B) A description of the animal to be seized, including any identification upon the animal.

(C) The authority and purpose for the possible seizure or impoundment.

(D) A statement that, in order to receive a hearing prior to any seizure, the owner or person authorized to keep the animal, or his or her agent, shall request the hearing by signing and returning the enclosed declaration of ownership or right to keep the animal to the officer providing the notice within two days, excluding weekends and holidays, of the date of the notice.

(E) A statement that the cost of caring for and treating any animal properly seized under this section is a lien on the animal, that any animal seized shall not be returned to the owner until the charges are paid, and that failure to request or to attend a scheduled hearing shall result in a conclusive determination that the animal may properly be seized and that the owner shall be liable for the charges.

(2) The preseizure hearing shall be conducted within 48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays, after receipt of the request. The seizing agency may authorize its own officer or employee to conduct the hearing if the hearing officer is not the same person who requests the seizure or impoundment of the animal and is not junior in rank to that person. The agency may utilize the services of a hearing officer from outside the agency for the purposes of complying with this section.

(3) Failure of the owner or keeper, or his or her agent, to request or to attend a scheduled hearing shall result in a forfeiture of any right to a preseizure hearing or right to challenge his or her liability for costs incurred pursuant to this section.



(4) The hearing officer, after the hearing, may affirm or deny the owner's or keeper's right to custody of the animal and, if reasonable grounds are established, may order the seizure or impoundment of the animal for care and treatment.

(h) If any animal is properly seized under this section, the owner or keeper shall be personally liable to the seizing agency for the cost of the seizure and care of the animal. Furthermore, if the charges for the seizure or impoundment and any other charges permitted under this section are not paid within 14 days of the seizure, or, if the owner, within 14 days of notice of availability of the animal to be returned, fails to pay charges permitted under this section and take possession of the animal, the animal shall be deemed to have been abandoned and may be disposed of by the impounding officer.

(i) If the animal requires veterinary care and the humane society or public agency is not assured, within 14 days of the seizure of the animal, that the owner will provide the necessary care, the animal shall not be returned to its owner and shall be deemed to have been abandoned and may be disposed of by the impounding officer. A veterinarian may humanely destroy an impounded animal without regard to the prescribed holding period when it has been determined that the animal has incurred severe injuries or is incurably crippled. A veterinarian also may immediately humanely destroy an impounded animal afflicted with a serious contagious disease unless the owner or his or her agent immediately authorizes treatment of the animal by a veterinarian at the expense of the owner or agent.

(j) No animal properly seized under this section shall be returned to its owner until, in the determination of the seizing agency or hearing officer, the animal is physically fit or the owner can demonstrate to the seizing agency's or hearing officer's satisfaction that the owner can and will provide the necessary care.

(k) Upon the conviction of a person charged with a violation of this section, or Section 597 or 597a, all animals lawfully seized and impounded with respect to the

violation shall be adjudged by the court to be forfeited and shall thereupon be transferred to the impounding officer or appropriate public entity for proper adoption or other disposition. A person convicted of a violation of this section shall be personally liable to the seizing agency for all costs of impoundment from the time of seizure to the time of proper disposition. Upon conviction, the court shall order the convicted person to make payment to the appropriate public entity for the costs incurred in the housing, care, feeding, and treatment of the seized or impounded animals. Each person convicted in connection with a particular animal may be held jointly and severally liable for restitution for that particular animal. The payment shall be in addition to any other fine or sentence ordered by the court.

The court may also order, as a condition of probation, that the convicted person be prohibited from owning, possessing, caring for, or having any contact with, animals of any kind and require the convicted person to immediately deliver all animals in his or her possession to a designated public entity for adoption or other lawful disposition or provide proof to the court that the person no longer has possession, care, or control of any animals. In the event of the acquittal or final discharge without conviction of the arrested person, the court shall, on demand, direct the release of seized or impounded animals upon a showing of proof of ownership. Any questions regarding ownership shall be determined in a separate hearing by the court where the criminal case was finally adjudicated and the court shall hear testimony from any persons who may assist the court in determining ownership of the animal. If the owner is determined to be unknown or the owner is prohibited or unable to retain possession of the animals for any reason, the court shall order the animals to be released to the appropriate public entity for adoption or other lawful disposition. This section is not intended to cause the release of any animal, bird, reptile, amphibian, or fish, seized or impounded pursuant to any other statute, ordinance, or municipal regulation. This section shall not prohibit the seizure or



impoundment of animals as evidence as provided for under any other provision of law.

(I) It shall be the duty of all peace officers, humane society officers, and animal control officers to use all currently acceptable methods of identification, both electronic and otherwise, to determine the lawful owner or caretaker of any seized or impounded animal. It shall also be their duty to make reasonable efforts to notify the owner or caretaker of the whereabouts of the animal and any procedures available for the lawful recovery of the animal and, upon the owner's and caretaker's initiation of recovery procedures, retain custody of the animal for a reasonable period of time to allow for completion of the recovery process. Efforts to locate or contact the owner or caretaker and communications with persons claiming to be the owner or caretaker shall be recorded and maintained and be made available for public inspection.

SEC. 20. Section 599d is added to the Penal Code, to read:

599d. (a) It is the policy of the state that no adoptable animal should be euthanized if it can be adopted into a suitable home. Adoptable animals include only those animals eight weeks of age or older that, at or subsequent to the time the animal is impounded or otherwise taken into possession, have manifested no sign of a behavioral or temperamental defect that could pose a health or safety risk or otherwise make the animal unsuitable for placement as a pet, and have manifested no sign of disease, injury, or congenital or hereditary condition that adversely affects the health of the animal or that is likely to adversely affect the animal's health in the future.

(b) It is the policy of the state that no treatable animal should be euthanized. A treatable animal shall include any animal that is not adoptable but that could become adoptable with reasonable efforts. This subdivision, by itself, shall not be the basis of liability for damages regarding euthanasia.

SEC. 21. Sections 12 and 13 of this act shall become operative on July 1, 1999.



SEC. 22. Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government Code, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the statewide cost of the claim for reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000), reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims Fund.

Notwithstanding Section 17580 of the Government Code, unless otherwise specified, the provisions of this act shall become operative on the same date that the act takes effect pursuant to the California Constitution.

Approved _____, 1998

Governor

